

Big Sky Libraries

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Montana State Library [MSL]

Inside:

A Word from Our State Librarian
Karen's Schedule
Directory Changes
Recycle Old CD-ROMs and Diskettes
What Can NRIS Do for You?
Traveling Lab Spotted
Interlibrary Reimbursement Program
Talking Book Library Receives Visit
Fair Booth Great Success
Around the State
Book Reviews
Notes from MSL
Spotlight: Tim Weisenburger,
WIS GIS Programmer/Analyst

New Acquisitions at MSL

**Key Business Sources of
the U.S. Government**, by
Steven W. Staninger, Susan
Riehm Goshorn, Jennifer C.
Boettcher

**New Steps to Service -
Common-Sense Advice for
the School Library Media
Specialist**, by Ann M. Was-
man

**Serials Cataloging Hand-
book, An Illustrative Guide to
the use of AACR2R and LC
Rule interpretations - Sec-
ond Edition**, by Carol Liheng,
Winnie S. Chan

**Libraries: Global Reach—
Local Touch**, edited by Kath-
leen De la Pena McCook, Bar-
bara J. Ford, Kate Lippincott,
Barbara Gordon

**Strategic Planning for Mul-
titype Library Cooperatives:**

Statewide LaserCat Subscription - Its Working!

MSL and Western Library Network [WLN] joined together this year to offer Montana libraries reduced subscription rates to LaserCat through a statewide volume pricing project. This year 78 libraries subscribed to four issues of LaserCat at a price of \$787 [normally \$1595] and 43 libraries subscribed to one issue at a cost of \$365 [regularly \$595]. Participating libraries include 66 public, 28 school, 11 academic, and 16 special libraries. Some libraries were able to subscribe to LaserCat this year only because the price was reduced. WLN shipped 113 copies of the September issue of LaserCat to MSL and we have sent these out to all subscribing libraries!

As the project developed over the last few months, MSL and WLN collaborated to work out many details. The staff at WLN helped every step of the way to make the process as simple as possible and to make sure the project is a success. MSL appreciates their efforts.

Libraries can still participate in one issue subscriptions for either the December or March issues. The cost would be \$365 for either issue. If you would like to participate, contact Sue Jackson at MSL, 1-800-338-5087. WLN and MSL plan to offer the statewide volume pricing again next year, beginning with the September 1999 issue. Information about participating in the 1999 project will be sent to

Calendar

For more information on these and other Montana Library events, visit our new web calendar at: <http://msl.state.mt.us/calendar.html>

September 26-October 3 — Banned Books Week: Celebrating the Freedom to Read

September 26 — Broad Valleys Federation Meeting, Helena with Trustee Workshop

September 26 — South Central Federation Meeting, Billings with Trustee Workshop

October 1 — Tamarack Federation Fall Meeting in Darby, with Trustee Workshop

October 1-2 — Montana Library Association Academic & Special Libraries Retreat, Boulder

October 3 — Friends of the Lewis & Clark Library, Montana Authors Book Fair

October 3 — Sagebrush Federation Fall Meeting, Miles City, with Trustee Workshop

October 6 — Trustee Workshop in Wolf Point for Golden Plains Federation

October 12 — Columbus Day - State Holiday

October 14 — Montana State Library Commission Meeting in Miles City

October 15-16 — Montana State Reading Council' 98 Conference, Great Falls, MT

October 23 — Montana Library Association Board Meeting, Bozeman, MT

A Word From Our State Librarian



The state library has just published its annual statistical report for public libraries. Trustees, librarians, and community members can use this report to compare their library with other Montana libraries and to plan for any needed improvements. Also, we can use these statistics to form a statewide picture of the health of public libraries. Remember, this picture will probably not describe your library; instead statewide statistics give us a view of overall trends and patterns.

This data shows that Montana public libraries received \$13,630,470 in fiscal year 1997, which averages \$15.96 per Montana resident. Local sources provide 85.2% of the income, 6.5% comes from the state and federal government, and 8.3% from other sources, such as foundation grants, donations, and gifts.

What picture emerges from these numbers? Montana public libraries obviously rely on the property tax for income. Also, Montana libraries have done a great job at soliciting private donations. In fact, this "extra" money is more, on the average, than state and federal funds.

How do Montana's overall public library statistics compare with other states? The following chart shows comparison of income and some selected service measures with two neighboring states.

	Montana	Idaho	Wyoming
\$ per capita	\$16.47	\$19.32	\$23.65
Materials per capita	3.10	3.5	4.92
Library visits per capita	3.57	4.4	4.74
Circulation per capita	5.91	7.9	8.56

What accounts for these differences in income? Wyoming only has county libraries which ensures a larger tax base than enjoyed by some of Montana's small city libraries. Idaho has a tax system that is based on three types of taxes - income, property and sales. Idaho's reliance on three sources of public revenue provides some stability for public services.

What accounts for the difference in services measures? I would point to the difference in income to explain this variance. Of course, money does not guarantee quality library service, but increased funding would provide more materials that, in many cases, improves the rate of circulation library visits per capita might also be related to the ability of the library to pay for longer hours and more materials for the public to enjoy.

Perhaps other structural and cultural variables in other states account for these differences. However, many Montana citizens believe that our current tax system does not provide equality to the tax payer or sufficient revenue for our public services. To study the problem, the 1997 Legislature appointed an Interim Property Tax Committee to consider tax reforms. The Committee work is almost done and they are considering three primary alternatives:

1) a change in the approach to valuation of Class 4 property, from "current market

Karen's Schedule:

Sept. 24 - MSU-Billings Campus

Sept. 25 - Big Horn County Library & Parkly-Billings Library

Sept. 26 - South Central Federation meeting, Billings

Oct. 1 - Tamarack Federation meeting, Darby

Oct. 2 - Academic and Special Library Retreat, Boulder

Oct. 6 - Trustee Training, Wolf Point

Oct. 14-16 - Commission meeting, Miles City

Oct. 23 - MLA Board meeting, Bozeman

Oct. 30 - Networking Task Force meeting, Bozeman

Nov. 9 - Law Revision Task Force Meeting, Helena

Directory Changes

Pages 57: Bill Kehler's correct e-mail address: kehrerb@rocky.edu

Page 65: Yellowstone Treatment Center Psychiatric Library is now called Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Library. New Director: Jeanine Holt-Seavy

RECYCLE OLD CD-ROMS AND COMPUTER DISKETTES

GreenDisk in Washington State will recycle CD-ROMs and computer diskettes. You can call them at:

1-800-305-DISK.

Library Statistics (Continued on page 3)

Library Statistics (Continued from page 2)

value" to "acquisition value,"

2) a combination of "cut and cap," rate reduction, and homestead exemption; and

3) comprehensive property tax reform, accompanied by a 4% statewide, general retail sales tax.

The library community must be very interested in the decisions of this committee and subsequent actions in the Legislature. Anticipating possible tax reform, the Law Revision Task Force drafted the following statement that the Commission adopted at its August meeting. Perhaps local boards can adopt similar statements and ask their legislators to consider their recommendations.

Whereas the Task Force recognizes that libraries in Montana are in difficult financial straits; and

Whereas I 105 severely limits taxing authority of cities and counties; and

Whereas statewide the tax structure has not sufficient flexibility to meet the information needs of the citizens of Montana;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Task Force recommends to the Commission the following avenues of redress:

1. Encourage all appropriate groups to join statewide tax reform, especially in respect to the funding of libraries;
2. Support local option and permissive mill levies wherever appropriate;
3. Support the Library District Law as another funding option for Montana's libraries;

Traveling Lab Spotted On the Road in Montana

The LSCA funded "Have Laptop Will Travel" computer lab traveled to six Montana sites during the summer, accompanied by MSL consultants Magi Malone, John Finn and Dana Ruby. Participants were introduced to web browsers, search engines, Internet searches and using e-mail. The workshops drew 74 participants. Priority for workshop space was given to staff of public libraries receiving fiscal year 1998 LSTA funds to connect to the Internet, but staff from other public libraries also attended.

The lab is composed of ten Dell laptops [fitted with wireless network cards], a printer, and an LCD projector. Despite a few technical problems with connections, the lab proved to be a wonderful training tool at the MSL workshops. Typical comments received about the lab included: "This is a really neat way to learn - hands on is great!" and "Very good lab." and "Very nice to have 'hands on' training." Thanks to Missoula Public Library, owner of the lab, and Jim Semmelroth, designer and creator of the lab, for making this tool available for training librarians in Montana.

What Can NRIS Do for You?

Have you ever been asked...

- How many animal species are there in Montana?
- Does Montana have any threatened or endangered plants? What do they look like?
- What's the annual average rainfall in Broadus?
- When does the Yellowstone River usually crest?
- Where can I find a map of wilderness areas in Montana? Indian reservations?

You can get quick answers to these questions, and many more, from the Natural Resource Information System at the Montana State Library. Or better yet, visit our website at: www.nris.state.mt.us.

Interlibrary Loan [ILL] Reimbursement Program

Interlibrary loan reimbursement forms for FY '99 are now available. Public and non-profit Montana libraries that are listed in the Montana Library Directory published by the Montana State Library that loan to other listed libraries are eligible to participate. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 10 working days after the end of each quarter for which reimbursement is sought. The reimbursement rate will be \$6.70 per item loaned in the first three quarters. The rate will be adjusted in the fourth quarter. Contact: Tristen Shinnick, 406-444-3115, tshinnic@msl.state.mt.us.

Talking Books Receives Visit

On August 27th and 28th Steve Prine, Head of Network Services Section for the National Library Service, made a consultation visit to the Montana Talking Book Regional Library. This biennial visit involves review of library services to our Montana patrons. Mr. Prine reviewed Montana's compliance with National Library Service and American Library Association standards, brought new information on trends and service directions, and made recommendations for improving patron and library management services. Formalized recommendations are expected in September.

Fair Booth Great Success

Montana libraries made their presence known at the State Fair in Great Falls this year. Volunteers from libraries across the state gave away pens, pencils, magnets and hand fans promoting this year's theme: Libraries: A Valuable Montana Resource. We also had a daily drawing for ALA Read Posters. Mel Gibson and Cindy Crawford were very popular, and Elvis was a close third. With the summer heat, the hand fans were a big hit.

A large scale map of Montana Libraries was on display and we encouraged people to stop by to place a pin in the map, indicating their closest library. Great Falls and Helena were heavily pinned, but people from as far as Plentywood, Busby, Dillon and Kalispell stopped by to tell us about their libraries.

We distributed information promoting the Great Falls Public Library, Chouteau County Free Library, University of Great Falls, Montana Talking Book Library, NRIS and the State Law Library. We also had a guest book and encouraged people to write comments about libraries. Comments included: "Libraries are cool and help you learn and travel places you couldn't go in real life." "I love to visit libraries all over the United States. They are our greatest source of hope." "This booth is fantastic!" "An open library is a wonderful way to open the mind." "Libraries are the life blood of our being."

The hours were long but the fair booth was a good way to promote libraries. Please consider volunteering next year, and sending

Around the State

The Darby Public Library has received a Libri Grant sponsored by the Darby Civic Group. They also received a \$60,000 computer grant in conjunction with the Darby Public Schools from U.S. West. They now have three public access computers and are connected to the Internet. The library has been remodeled to accommodate this welcome addition to their community services. Congratulations to the Darby Public Library!

Book Reviews

It Comes with the Territory, by Anne M. Turner, McFarland & Co., 1993: This book provides solutions to a wide range of typical library security problems such as theft and personal safety. It gives suggestions on how to take preventive steps to make your library safer. With specific examples, including dialogues, on how to deal with angry people, censorship, and latchkey children, this book provides useful information and techniques on safety.

Best Bet Internet - Reference & Research When You Don't Have Time to Mess Around, by Shirley Duglin Kennedy, ALA, 1997: Written by a journalist/librarian/Internet consultant this book is full of useful information to help with Internet research. One of the appendices is "Webpage Checklists" which gives you criteria on how to evaluate the quality and contents of a web page based on the subject or type of information you are seeking. There are very useful appendices, a glossary and a bibliography. This book also provides: five hundred quality sites for research and reference, lists of websites grouped by topic, browser tricks, how to effectively use mailing lists and newsgroups, people searches, and an

Notes From MSL

Commission meets at the new Whitefish

Library: On August 12, the new Whitefish Community Library hosted the Library Commission. Joey Kositzky, branch director, showed the Commission the \$1.2 million building and reviewed the community fundraising efforts. The Commission:

- accepted the revised interlibrary loan program rules with minor corrections to the draft;
- adopted a statement of intent regarding tax reform;
- approved the interlibrary loan revised protocols and changes in internal policies regarding exempt personnel and reclassification procedures;
- evaluated the performance of the state librarian;
- approved a schedule of policy revisions;
- considered a proposal to fund a resource sharing system with FY '99 federal funds and asked the state librarian for more information, including feedback from librarians; and
- adopted a mission statement.

The Commission and MSL staff extend their thanks to the Flathead County Library Board and staff and to Whitefish's community library advisory board and staff for their hospitality.

The Commission will hold its next meeting in Miles City on October 14 at the Miles City Public Library. Librarians, trustees, and interested persons are urged to attend. The MSL web site [<http://msl.state.mt.us> - click on the Commission button and then on the meeting information link] will have meeting materials as soon as they are available.

Library Services Advisory Council News:

The Council met on July 28 to review the progress on current LSTA projects. Sue Jackson, Federal grants coordinator, reported that 17 libraries have been connected to the Internet through a FY 1998 project. Funded by LSCA dollars, the Sheridan Public Library is under construction while the Dillon Public Library has successfully completed historic building reviews and is almost ready for remodeling. Dillon is the last LSCA funded library construction project in Montana.

At a previous meeting, the Council approved the

expenditures of LSTA FY 1999 funds to support a statewide training session in September 1999 and a library improvement project in Madison County. In July, the Council saw a demonstration of a resource sharing system from the CPS Company. After much discussion about implementing a like system in Montana, the Council voted to recommend system funding to the Commission.

In other Council news, Duran DuBoise resigned as he is moving to Illinois. The Council is seeking a replacement for Mr. DuBoise who represented library patrons who cannot use traditional library services. If you have a suggestion, please call Darlene Staffeldt at 444-5381. The Council will meet again in January.

Library Legislation: The Law Revision Task Force met on August 5 and completed drafts of proposed legislation. The first priority is for new sections that would allow communities to form library districts. The second priority is to change existing sections of library law to:

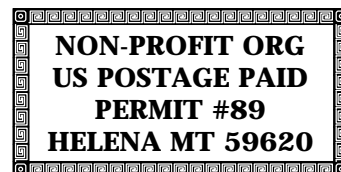
- allow voters to approve a multi year increase in the maximum library levy;
- make some loans between certain types of libraries illegible for reimbursement;
- allow all types of libraries to join federations; and
- give the Commission rule-making authority regarding the composition of the Federation advisory boards and base grants.

At their August meeting, the Commission approved dividing priority number two into two pieces of draft legislation. The Commission's second priority would contain all the changes listed above but omit the change to library levy law, which would be contained in a separate bill ranked as number three. The Commission decided to do so to take advantage of possible sponsorship.

The Governor's office has approved these drafts. The next step in the pre-legislature process, is for the Legislative Services Division (LSD) to complete the drafts. When LSD finishes, the state library will publish the drafts on its homepage.



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Karen Strége, State Librarian

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*Spotlight: Timothy R. Weisenburger
GIS Programmer/Analyst for WIS*

Timothy R. Weisenburger was hired July 6, 1998 as the new Geographic Information System [GIS] Programmer/Analyst in the Water Information System[WIS] of the Natural Resource Information System [NRIS].

A native of Montana, Tim was raised in Missoula. After graduating high school, Tim worked for the U.S. Forest Service then joined the Air Force as a Power and Refrigeration Technician on Minuteman III missiles and in 1992 transferred to the Montana Air National Guard as a weapons loader on the F16 fighter. Tim is still active in the Montana Air National Guard. Since transferring to the Guard he has worked at Champion International in Bonner MT, then returned to school for his B.S. in Forest Resource Management from the University of Montana, with an emphasis in Geographical Information Systems and Spatial Analysis.

Before coming to NRIS, Tim worked as a GIS intern for the DNRC and then became the GIS coordinator for the Riparian and Wetland Research Program at the University of Montana. Tim, his wife Angela and their 20 month old son Kyle moved to Helena in July. In their spare time they enjoy boating, hunting, fishing and hiking. Contact Tim at 406-444-0539 or e-mail: tweisen@msl.state.mt.us



Tim

**Paraprofessional Interest Group
by Rita Gibson**

The Montana Library Paraprofessionals plan to sponsor a workshop at the MLA/MPLA Conference in June, 1999. The group is also looking into a Library Technical Assistant and an MLS program for Montana, and certification of library employees. Mike Schulz of Western Montana College of UM is considering a summer institute for paraprofessionals. Contact: Rita Gibson, 444-3660, rkgibson@hotmail.com.